

9-2012

# Leadership Department Newsletter - September 2012

Andrews University

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## Recommended Citation

Andrews University, "Leadership Department Newsletter - September 2012" (2012). *Leadership Department Newsletter 2012*. 6.  
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## FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

***Robson Marinho, PhD***

### Welcome to the New Academic Year!

How do you feel at the beginning of a new academic year? I know your answers to this question will vary considerably. Those who just started their program may feel a lot of “excitement.” Those who are in the middle of their program journey may feel something like “routine.” Those who have been in the program longer and are trying to finish may feel something like “impatience!” You name your feeling! But whatever you feel, there is one reality that applies to all: Opportunity! Regardless of your stage in the program, you have a brand new opportunity to advance your program and renew your commitment to your academic goals. And as you renew your commitment, I would like to remind you of a few important things to consider as you begin this academic year:

- Registration – Most of you are already registered. Those of you who haven’t, please hurry up! Timely registration is a concrete indicator of your commitment and progress in the program. Besides, remember the continuous registration policy in the leadership program!
- Clearing DGs – Take advantage of this new semester to finish your incomplete coursework.
- Advising – It is always good to review your program goals and share your commitment and progress with your advisor. Advisors are your #1 support in the program!

Take full advantage of this new opportunity and enjoy a successful semester!



### Interview: Dr. Amal Alansari

At a recent faculty vespers, we took turns sharing how we had been blessed in a real way throughout the week. Two faculty members immediately said “Amal’s life” had blessed them. We had just attended Amal Alansari’s portfolio presentation and dissertation defense, which were more than a mere sharing of her scholarly research and the integration of research and practice. In the words of Janet Ledesma, “It was a story of character, resilience, and most importantly, an example of genuine godliness,” said Janet Ledesma. “Amal’s story needed to be told.” Janet’s interview with Dr. Alansari tells her story.

**Janet:** Please share a little about yourself.

**Amal:** I was born in Kuwait City to a loving family. My family consisted of my mother, father and 12 siblings; 5 sisters and 7 brothers. In total we are 13 children! I have been married for 19 years to a supportive and loving husband and we have three children; a son enrolled in college, a son in high school, and a daughter in middle school.

**Janet:** Please share your academic preparation.

**Amal:** I attended Kuwait University where I majored in Islamic and Arabic studies. I was then able to teach these subjects for six years to middle and high school students in Kuwait City. I later obtained a master’s degree in education with a concentrated area of focus in school administration, also at Kuwait University.

**Janet:** Why did you choose Andrews University for your advanced degree?

**Amal:** Andrews University was a God choice for me.” You see, Kuwait University offered me a full scholarship to attend any university in America. I went online to the website of the Culture Office in Kuwait out of Washington, DC, and did a search of universities that had strong accredited school administration programs



and were also approved by our Culture Office. The web search listed the universities in alphabetical order; Andrews was first! However, when I presented my list to my advisor, he suggested I pick a university that was ranked within the top ten universities in America. Therefore, I applied and was accepted at Michigan State University in Lansing, Michigan. I had great fears of attending a large university. Going from a small Islamic city in the Middle East to a larger city was quite intimidating to say the least. Immediately after we arrived at MSU, I knew that it was simply not the right place for me. It was not only the cultural issues; I also experienced lifestyle, bias, and school related issues. My heart kept telling me to contact Andrews University. One day I decided to go online and send an email to the EDAL [Educational Leadership] department. Immediately I received a response from Dr. Gary Gifford. He requested that I come and interview with him and from the moment I arrived on campus, I knew without a doubt that God had a better choice for my life at Andrews. I have found that in my advisors, the faculty, the students, and the leadership here.

**Janet:** What do you especially like about Andrews University?

**Amal:** I admire the relationships that are evidenced on campus. Relationships like those between the faculty and the students, students to students, and administration to students. A respectful environment is fostered where everyone is trying to help each other in spite of cultural or background differences.

**Janet:** What do you especially like about the EDAL program at Andrews University?

**Amal:** In the Middle East, a degree in school administration is not offered. We also do not have the resources or classes to prepare educational leaders to be effective school administrators. When I worked in Kuwait City as a teacher, I had three different principals with three different styles of leading. I recognize now how much they would have benefitted from a strong school administration program. In the EDAL program, I was exposed to a wealth of knowledge, resources, practice, and research. My best classes were in the area of school law with Dr. Furst and in research.

Another invaluable experience for me was my internship experience. I did my internship at the Village Adventist Elementary School and for the first time I could see the importance of integrating faith and learning. I wondered why we separate God from our decisions when as school administrators we need God in every decision.

**Janet:** What challenges did you experience at Andrews University?

**Amal:** My first semester was extremely challenging in understanding the system, especially because taking online classes was a new experience for me. My professors, however, provided the much needed help and resources necessary for me to be a successful student.

Another challenge I experienced was choosing the right dissertation topic. It took me one year to develop my survey instrument because it had to be translated into Arabic and English and at the same time convey the same message. The survey needed to be approved by the Kuwait City Minister of Education, which was another lengthy process. However, I had a good dissertation committee and they were helpful, supportive, and resourceful.

**Janet:** Please tell us about your dissertation.

**Amal:** My dissertation topic came from my master's thesis, where I researched the importance of the principal in relation to the faculty, parents, students, and the overall school. My goal was to research how to improve principal effectiveness and leadership in the city of Kuwait. It was also to help principals lead with passion using the resources and knowledge already identified in the American school systems. My advisor, Dr. Covrig, was very helpful in helping me understand principles used in the United States that could perhaps help with formulating my study. However, what helped me the most was praying for God to lead my research. I would tell God that I was doing this research for Him.

My dissertation is titled "*A Survey of Leadership Standards for Professional Preparation of Public School Principals in Kuwait*" and it will soon be available through the James White Library!

**Janet:** What will you do next now that you completed your dissertation?

**Amal:** I will teach educational administration courses at Kuwait University. I have enrolled in the Post-Doctorate Certification program at Andrews University in order to prepare school principals and Ministers of

Education in Kuwait City by adding my voice to the current research. I would also like to help K-12 girls and young ladies with personal leadership skills. I will design curriculum for K-12 principals using the principles and practices of the knowledge and resources available in the American school system. I will also volunteer in the not-for-profit schools in Kuwait City. However, the thing that I most want to do next is to always do what God wants me to do. We have talents and skills, yet my prayer is for God to help me serve Him and others as I fulfill His will for my life.

**Janet:** What advice would you share with others in advanced degree programs at Andrews University?

**Amal:** First, Don't ever miss your program orientation week. You will miss great information, feedback, and resources to help you be successful in your program. Don't hesitate to ask questions. Always stay connected with your advisors. I always respected and trusted my advisor. Keep in touch with the faculty as well. In addition, stay in contact with your classmates, colleagues, and friends that you meet on campus. They will give you feedback and help you on your mutual journey.

Finally, always keep your faith in God. Thank God for your blessings, be in touch with God's direction and leading in your life, and be in constant prayer with God. God is our Creator and is in control of every detail of our lives. Therefore, keep your prayer life vibrant!

## DEPARTMENT NEWS

### LEAD Professional Development Retreat

Faculty and staff of the Leadership Department engaged in a two-day professional development retreat in South Haven, Michigan, August 29-30. The guest speaker and consultant was Mickey Hay, a PhD graduate of the Leadership program (2005). Mickey facilitated a very productive discussion using her "Creative Problem Solving & Innovative Projects Life Cycle," in which the participants shared their self-perceptions of roles and performance along the cycle followed by group discussion. The event was instrumental in identifying areas for improvement and in initiating the development of short- and long-term strategic planning for the department.









## LEAD Participates in National Teacher's Convention

More than 6,000 educators, all from the Adventist educational system, gathered for four days (August 5-8) in Nashville, Tennessee, to participate in a national convention organized by the Education Department of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Several School of Education faculty members presented papers at the convention, including our K-12 program Coordinator, Janet Ledesma. This event was also a major opportunity for networking and for marketing the LEAD programs—we had the opportunity to share more than 2,000 brochures and interview prospective candidates for our programs.



## LEADERSHIP PROGRAM NEWS

Congratulations to Monty Murdoch, PhD!





On August 31, Monty Murdoch (2000 cohort) defended his dissertation, entitled "Environmental Literacy of Seventh-Day Adventist Teachers in the Parochial Schools of the Florida Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists." The dissertation committee was chaired by Jim Tucker. Monty had previously presented his portfolio while at Andrews this summer. Congratulations!

### **Congratulations to Cheri Gregory, MA!**

This month Cheri Gregory (2005 cohort) completed her research paper, which was her final requirements for the MA in Leadership. She is now ready to start the PhD. Congratulations!

### **Congratulations to August 2012 Graduates!**

August 5, 2012, was the graduation of several Leadership participants. It is great to see our graduates doing so well! Enjoy the pictures below.











### **Bob Sornson Publishes Book**

Bob Sornson (2000 cohort) published a book on early childhood practices entitled *Fanatically Formative, Successful Learning During the Crucial K-3 Years*. As he explains, “most of what is in this book is a direct outgrowth of the dissertation work I did while at Andrews, and I am especially grateful for that experience.” Andrews University students can access a free review copy available at <http://www.sagepub.com/books/Book237868>.

### **Eileen White Lectures at University in Ghana**

Eileen White (1995 cohort) just returned from a 12-day educational and cultural tour to Ghana, where she delivered lectures on institutional governance and quality at Valley View University. Some of the topics treated included “Ensuring Institutional Quality” and “Strategic Planning and Where God Fits.” In her presentations, Dr. White, who was accompanied by her husband, O.C. White, a civil engineer, praised Valley View for the standards it has achieved in Ghana. As an international consultant, Dr. White provides educational and organizational development strategies in the area of planning, assessment, and evaluation to private and public colleges and universities.

Click on <http://www.vvu.edu.gh/index.php/vvu-news/97-institutional-governance-and-quality-workshop-held> to read the whole story.



## **Sarah Barzee Accepts New Position**

Sarah Barzee (2003 cohort) recently joined the new Talent Team as Education Division Director of Leadership Development at the Connecticut State Department of Education. Beginning Tuesday, August 14, Sarah is responsible for developing and implementing strategies to enhance and expand educator leadership development programs in the state's schools and districts, as well as within the Department. Sarah was most recently Assistant Executive Director at CREC. Sarah received her PhD from Andrews University.

## **Anthony Stahl Accepts New Position**



Anthony Stahl (2008 cohort) was recently promoted to Administrator of Florida Hospital Heartland Medical Center-Lake Placid. Florida Hospital Heartland is a group of three hospitals—which are about 20 to 30 minutes apart—in the cities of Wauchula, Lake Placid, and Sebring. He said, “We have about 1500 employees and a wonderful team of nurses, doctors, clinicians, staff and volunteers and I feel privileged to be part of such an excellent group. It is my first experience to be placed in charge of a hospital. I continue to be Vice President of the other two hospitals.” And he concludes: “I owe so much to my leadership program.”

## **Shawn Collins receives Dissertation Award**





Shawn Collins received the Outstanding Dissertation Award of the School of Education for 2011-2012. Dr. Collins' dissertation, *The Emotional Intelligence Profiles and Cognitive Measures of Nurse Anesthesia Students in the Southeastern United States*, looks at emotional intelligence in nursing students at three junctures in their programs: the beginning, at one year, and at completion. The purpose of his study was to establish a baseline of understanding as a potential metric to guide in future studies about admission and emotional intelligence programing for nurses in these intensive training programs. What made his dissertation stand out was the sophisticated and complex statistical analysis he had to do to create a cross-sectional study. Descriptive statistics, factor analysis, correlation, multiple regression, and Q-factor analysis were used to describe and examine the statistical relationship between variables. He cross validated his findings using an internal replicability estimate, which is often recommended by methodologists but is very rarely done or done well. While some findings related to emotional intelligence did emerge, his main findings were that the ability to transfer didactic knowledge to the clinical setting was predictive of national certification examination (NCE) scores. Also, his study confirmed a finding repeatedly noted in other studies: that preadmission overall GPA (grade point average) was predictive of many of the success variables in the programs.

## HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM NEWS

### **Congratulations to Graduates Jeanne Herman and Amilah Jamieson!**

Jeanne Herman and Amilah Jamieson graduated with their MA degrees in Higher Education on August 5, 2012. Congratulations!











## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **December 2012 Prospective Graduates**

Anyone planning on graduating in December must submit the Application for Graduation, found at <http://www.andrews.edu/grad/documents/graduation.pdf>. This form is required within the graduating semester, so even if you have previously completed one you must reapply and resubmit this semester. The form will ask if you have completed the Advancement to Candidacy form – please check YES. Since December does not have a ceremony, the form inquires if you will march in the May 2013 ceremony – please check Yes or No. You can change your mind if needed. Please complete, scan and email this form to Dr. Freed or fax it to 269-471-6374. DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 28.